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ACTION: POL
INFO: CONS TSR PMA ECON DCM AMB RAO FCS PA MGT DAO

DISSEMINATION: POL /1
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: POL:DJO'GRADY
DRAFTED: POL:ARENZULLI
CLEARED: POL:CKRAFFT, IST:ALILLIS (INFO)

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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8529
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEATRS/TREASURY DEPT WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHC/DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAHL/HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ANKARA 000098

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR G/TIP, EUR/SE, EUR/PGI, USAID

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TAGS: [KTIP](#) [ELAB](#) [KCRM](#) [KFRD](#) [KWMN](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [SMIG](#)
SUBJECT: TURKEY/TIP: SENIOR RESEARCHER PREVIEWS DEMAND STUDY

REF: 08 ANKARA 2194

Classified By: POL Counselor Daniel O'Grady, reasons 1.4 (b,d)

11. (C) SUMMARY. A leading Turkish academic previewed for us her recently concluded, GOT-commissioned study on the demand for trafficked persons in Turkey. The study will report that the market for trafficked victims is driven largely by upper middle-class and wealthy Turks' demand for commercial sex, in particular by women from the former Soviet Union. Of the foreign women engaged in commercial sex in Turkey, our contact estimates that up to fifty percent would meet the legal definition of a "victim" in Turkey, though self-employment as prostitutes is not uncommon. Foreign visitors do not contribute significantly to TIP in Turkey. Turkey's legal brothels, which cater to a lower class clientele, do not employ foreign women and are not believed to contribute significantly to TIP, though some prostitutes working in these brothels may work there under duress. The study will reveal that demand for domestic service contributes to the trafficking problem, often leading to victimization for sexual exploitation. Our contact believes that domestic trafficking is an issue in Turkey, but is less visible than international trafficking. A Turkish woman engaged in prostitution or exploitative labor is more often viewed by society as a "victim of misfortune" than a trafficking victim. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) Prof. Dr. Ayse Ayata (PROTECT), Chairperson for the Center for Black Sea and Central Asia at Ankara's prestigious Middle East Technical University (METU), previewed for us January 15 her study on demand for trafficked victims in Turkey. The GOT-commissioned study, which Ayata completed two months ago, is currently under review by the GOT anti-TIP taskforce for technical accuracy; Ayata does not expect the report to be altered significantly, but it is up to the GOT if and when to release it. She believes the GOT intends to

use the report's release as a public awareness-raising opportunity. Ayata and her team of researchers have also been tapped to study and make recommendations on the GOT's anti-TIP strategy and the taskforce's efficiency, though a contract has not yet been finalized. Ayata said she looks forward to consulting with us on best practices in the fight against TIP employed in the U.S. and other countries as she conducts this analysis.

13. (C) Ayata told us at the outset that she was positively impressed by Turkish security officials. The higher the rank and the closer to Ankara, she said, the better their knowledge of TIP and performance. However, she observed during her research in Adana, Antalya, Izmir and Istanbul that "first responders" in the provinces often lack awareness and need more training. The Turkish National Police was nonetheless supportive of the research, she said. Jandarma, on the other hand, was unwilling to talk to Ayata and her team without express permission from headquarters -- unsurprising given the complex relationship between the military and civil society in Turkey.

14. (C) According to Ayata, demand for commercial sex by upper-middle class and wealthy Turks drives demand for trafficked victims, namely women from the former Soviet Union. Despite the number of Russian victims identified in Turkey having dropped precipitously in recent years compared to Moldovans and Central Asians, Ayata said the market is still "Russian, Russian, Russian." While Turkey's trafficking hotspots are also its tourist centers, foreign tourists do not contribute significantly to demand for trafficked victims. Indeed, Russians are among the largest group of tourists in Turkey and Ayata argued that these tourists will not travel here just to have sex with Russian women. Rather, the presence of large numbers of tourists allows foreign prostitutes and trafficking networks to operate "invisibly," whereas in more provincial cities, foreign women would attract attention. In many cases, Turkish customers do not use a brothel, but rather procure a woman over the internet, sometimes paying the airfare from Russia, and "leasing" the woman for a period of time. Self-employment for foreign prostitutes in Turkey is not uncommon. In Ayata's view, the majority of these women are victims in that they are doing something most would rather not do, even if they came to Turkey with the intention of engaging in prostitution. She estimated that up to half these women are victims in the legal and traditional sense: they have been victimized by "the process" and cannot get out, often as a result or threat of physical and/or psychological harm. Compared to these "process victims," Ayata thought the number of women kidnapped and trafficked physically across the border to be minimal.

15. (C) Drawing on her sociological expertise, Ayata posited that the TIP problem in Turkey is linked to the status of women here. As in other Mediterranean cultures, Turkish wives are often not expected to be a husband's primary sexual partner; well-funded Turks seek out other partners, primarily when traveling on business. Less affluent Turkish men have fewer opportunities for such infidelities, though they may turn to a legal brothel on occasion. Legal brothels charge only a fraction of what a wealthy Turkish businessman might pay for a Russian woman -- \$100 to \$1000 per night, according to Ayata. As such, it is not profitable to traffic foreign victims into the legal brothels, even if it were possible. Though the women employed in legal brothels are Turkish, Ayata emphasized that some may have been "sold" to the brothels by their families and/or work there under duress. (NOTE: NGO contacts have told us that the number of prostitutes in Turkey's legal brothels has shrunk under the current government, though this may be contributing to higher numbers of women working in the streets, enduring other forms of exploitation and abuse (reftel). END NOTE.) Ayata had no evidence that Turkish men participate, to any significant extent, in organized commercial sex tourism abroad, but said it would be unsurprising if Turkish businessmen abroad solicited prostitutes, so long as they were available discreetly.

16. (C) While acknowledging that a significant number of "157" hotline rescues in Turkey are the result of a client acting to protect a trafficking victim, Ayata sought to dispel the notion that most Turkish men are so chivalrous. She told us that, through her male researchers, she was able to interview a number of clients of foreign prostitutes, and not all said they would be heroes if they learned the woman they were procuring sex with was a trafficking victim. Most said they would prefer not to know and expressed hesitancy about contacting law enforcement. Ayata said that one recommendation in her report is that business associations should promulgate codes of conduct to get sex out of Turkish business practices, where arranging prostitutes remains an important part of deal-making, especially on the convention circuit. She emphasized that this includes business associations affiliated with the country's rapidly emerging and wealthy religious elite. While some religiously-minded Turks would naturally shun sex with a prostitute, she said, most are no more pure than other Turkish businessmen.

17. (C) According to Ayata, the demand for household labor also contributes to TIP in Turkey -- some sexually exploited victims entered Turkey to engage in domestic service. But she said she learned little about domestic trafficking during her research. The problem exists in Turkey, but is less common than international trafficking and also less visible. A poor Turkish woman, for example, forced to engage in prostitution, perhaps as a result of having gotten pregnant outside of marriage and needing to escape the threat of an "honor killing," would more likely be seen here as a victim of misfortune than a trafficking victim. Such a woman might end up in one of the legal brothels or on the streets. Outside of such pressures, Ayata said, Turkish women do not gravitate toward prostitution, regardless of their socio-economic status, while Turkish men have a clear preference for Russian prostitutes. Speaking frankly and emphasizing that she was not casting blame on victims, Ayata, who has extensive academic experience in the former Soviet Union, surmised that the legacy of communism and the upheavals that followed it have eroded family values and sexual mores in the former Soviet Union, leading to more open attitudes about sex, whereas Turkish women remain conservative and family-oriented. Arab and Iranian women share similar values to Turks, which is why, she believes, there are almost no incidents of women from those neighboring states being victimized in Turkey for sexual exploitation.

COMMENT

18. (C) The demand study is an important first step toward the GOT adopting measures to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts. We hope the government will use the study's release as an opportunity to raise public awareness of TIP and how soliciting prostitution contributes to the TIP problem. A key measure will be for the GOT to implement the study's recommendation concerning the need for Turkish business associations to implement codes of conduct that encourage businessmen to stop the practice of arranging for prostitutes as a part of doing business in Turkey.
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